

Department of Defense (DoD)
Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS)
Field Advisory Services - *FAS*
Classification Appeal Decision

DoD Decision:	Supervisory Firefighter, GS-0081-08
Initial classification:	Supervisory Firefighter, GS-0081-08
Organization:	Naval Station Fire and Emergency Services Division
Date:	May 07, 1998

INFORMATION CONSIDERED

This appeal decision is based on information from the following sources:

1. The appellant's letter with attachments.
2. The official position description for the appealed position and the evaluation statement.
3. Statements of job description accuracy signed by the appellant and the supervisor.
4. An organizational chart pertaining to the appealed position.
5. The appellant's latest SF-50.
6. The appellant's latest performance standards.
7. The supervisor's official position description and the evaluation statement.
8. The subordinates' official position descriptions with evaluations.
9. Telephone interview with the acting supervisor and audit with the appellant.

STANDARDS REFERENCED

A. United States Office of Personnel Management Fire Protection and Prevention Series, GS-0081, December 1997, HRCD-4.

B. United States Office of Personnel Management General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG), April 1998.

C. United States Office of Personnel Management Introduction to the Position Classification Standards December 1997, HRCD-4.

BACKGROUND AND POSITION INFORMATION

The appellant is a Supervisory Firefighter, GS-081-08, and is responsible for a structural fire station located in the Air Operations Department, Fire and Emergency Services Division, Naval Ammunition Support Detachment (NASD), Camp Xxx, and Operation Post 1, on the island of Yyy, U.S. Naval Station Zzz. The island of Yyy is in a remote location and separated from the Naval Station at a distance of approximately seven nautical miles by a channel of water. The area of operations is comprised of 22,274 acres of land with an off base mutual aid agreement throughout the island. There are approximately 209 structures and/or maintenance facilities. Structures include, but are not limited to, 128 ammunition magazine storage areas, four helicopter landing pads, two landing craft ramps, one ammunition/berthing pier, nine target ranges and a microwave/radar station. Mission support is provided during multinational exercises which involve large scale land, air, sea, personnel and various types of ammunition movements. Support activities include Permanent and Transient Barracks, Navy Exchange Mini-Mart, Morale, Welfare and Recreational Facilities and dining establishments.

The appellant performs day to day fire suppression, protection, and prevention supervisory duties for tenant, permanent and transient commands located at the U.S. Naval Station at Camp Xxx and NASD Yyy Island. The appellant is responsible for Fire Station No. 3 which consists of two crews with a total of two Lead Firefighters, GS-081-07. two Firefighters, GS-081-06 and six Firefighters, GS-081-04.

The appellant believes that his position was "erroneously classified" because of the following: failure to recognize that local and multinational military exercises held can increase the probability of causing explosion and fire dangers to the military and civilian communities; failure to interpret the GS-081 standard which allows for Station Chief positions, under certain conditions, to be classified two levels above the grade level of the crew chief; and that the three separate locations which the appellant is responsible for should add to supervisory responsibility.

TITLE AND SERIES DETERMINATION

The Fire Protection and Prevention Series, GS-081, covers positions that "supervise or perform work to control and extinguish fires, rescue persons endangered by fire, and reduce or eliminate fire hazards. It also covers fire service positions that control hazardous materials incidents; train personnel in fire protection and prevention plans, procedures, and standards; and advise on improvements to structures for better fire prevention. Positions in this series require a knowledge of firefighting and fire prevention theory and techniques, a knowledge of fixed and mobile firefighting equipment operation; and/or the ability to plan, direct, or carry out fire protection and prevention programs and operations." The appellant is in agreement that the work which he performs is best described and covered by the GS-081 Series. However, the appellant believes that the title of his position should be changed to "Supervisory Station Chief". This is not an authorized title in the standard. In accordance with the titling instructions, "Positions, with the exception of fire chief, that meet the criteria of the appropriate guidance for supervisory positions are identified by prefixing the 'Supervisory' to the

basic title." Therefore, the appropriate title and series for the appealed position is Supervisory Firefighter, GS-081.

GRADE LEVEL DETERMINATION

GS-081 Standard

The appellant reports directly to the Fire Chief, U.S. Naval Station Zzz, who has full responsibility for planning and directing all fire protection, prevention, and emergency services for the Naval Station. The agency classified the appealed position as a station chief position. In accordance with Part I, Section III (classification of Supervisory and Lead Firefighter Positions) of the GS-081 Standard "Station chief positions are typically found at larger installations with three or more stations when the fire chief and assistant chief are unable to provide immediate oversight and direction of day-to-day activities. Each station typically has two or more crews on a shift." Although, the appealed position supervises only two crews who perform duties on two separate shifts, the remote location combined with the absence of immediate oversight and direction of day-to-day activities support the classification of the appealed position under the station chief grading criteria. Consequently, we concur that the appealed position meets the coverage under the station chief criteria.

As such, "Station chief positions are normally one grade above the crew chiefs at their stations. However, a station chief at a very large installation where the station is in a remote location, and the nature of the fire hazards and potential severity is high, and/or a station chief with four or more crews, where a higher level line supervisor not on the shift, may be classified two grades above the crew chiefs."

In order to evaluate both the nature of the fire hazards and potential severity of fires, Part I, Section II (Classification of Fire Chief Positions), Factor 1 – Nature and variety of fire hazards and Factor 2 – Potential severity of fires, will both be cross referenced for the purpose of comparison to determine whether a two-grade classification above the GS-07 level Crew Chiefs (Lead Firefighters) is supportable.

Factor 1 – Nature and variety of fire hazards. The type and variety of fire hazards at an installation directly affect the difficulty of establishing and maintaining effective fire protection and prevention programs. The differences in difficulty are reflected in 1. The need for variation and adaptation of agency guidelines in establishing programs, 2, the frequency and extent to which the programs must be revised to meet changing conditions, and 3. The degree to which management requirements are complicated by other factors (e.g., numerous requests for services other than emergency firefighting; continuing personal contacts with top level officials to sell the program objectives; keeping up with changing conditions; and ensuring compliance with established regulations and procedures). The appellant is responsible for providing fire suppression, protection and prevention services for both ends of Yyy Island. This includes approximately two hundred and nine (209) structures and/or maintenance facilities. Structures include, but are not limited to, 128 ammunition magazine storage areas, four helicopter landing pads, two landing craft ramps, one ammunition/berthing pier, nine target ranges and a microwave/radar station. Support activities include Permanent and Transient Barracks,

Navy Exchange Mini-Mart, Morale, Welfare and Recreational Facilities and dining establishments. There are no residential buildings and the barracks houses 57 people. Most buildings have as designated fire wardens who coordinate fire protection issues with the appellant. For example, the building fire warden is responsible for ensuring that all fire extinguishers are present and fully charged. The Naval Station Fire Chief is primarily responsible for all major fire protection and prevention programmatic, policy and administrative issues for the Naval Station. Consequently, this factor does not meet a high level for nature and variety of fire hazards to justify a two-grade classification above the Lead Firefighter's grade level.

Factor 2 – Potential severity of fires. This factor measures the degree to which the probability of fires or emergency incidents becoming large and widespread influences the complexity of the protection and prevention programs. In many cases, the same characteristics that create the potential for fires (referenced in factor 1) also increase the possibility that the fires will be large and destructive. For example, large scale aircraft operations are characterized by a high potential for fires, and the presence of large amounts of fuel and explosives also increases the likelihood that the fires, once started, will become severe. There are approximately 5,000 civilians who inhabit the middle part of the island and a separate civilian fire department is responsible for all their fire protection services. The appellant does provide mutual aid support by protecting the civilian airport runway which extends onto the Naval Station land. Since the beginning of the calendar year, there have been a total of three electrical fires, one helicopter warning light standby, and numerous routine brush fires. Air operations include four helicopter landing pads and airfield activities (light small planes) which involve a limited number of moves. Most of the ammunition is stored in concrete encasements. The overall risk to human life for all the 300 civilian and 60 military personnel, who at various times occupy the appellant's assigned area, is minimal. This includes periods of routine military operations (ammunition on and off loading) and exercises. The appealed position does not meet the condition where the potential severity for fires is high to support a two-grade classification above the Lead Firefighter's grade level.

In conclusion, the appealed position performs supervisory duties at a very large installation where the station is in a remote location, but does not meet the two other conditions where both the nature of the fire hazards and potential severity must be high in order to support a higher grade. Additionally, the Naval Station Fire Chief provides emergency support to the appellant's operation and is responsible for all major programmatic, policy, and administrative decisions for the entire Naval Station. Consequently, the position is appropriately graded at the GS-08 level for program management duties which is one level above the GS-07 Lead Firefighters.

GSSG

For classifying supervisory work, the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards specified that "Because some standards which cover program management work do not also measure the difficulties and responsibilities of supervising people, users wishing to classify a supervisory or program management position in any occupational series should:

Apply criteria for measuring program management work as provided in the standard for

the series to which the position is classified or in related standards or guides which measure program management duties and responsibilities,

and

Apply the GSSG to positions whose supervisory duties and responsibilities meet minimum requirements for coverage by the guide.

The overall grade of the position should reflect the highest level of program management or supervisory work performed.

The GSSG provides criteria for determining the General Schedule grade level for supervisory positions in grades GS-5 through GS-15. It also contains criteria for evaluating managerial responsibilities that may accompany supervisory responsibilities in this range of grades. The appealed position exercises supervisory control and direction over eight employees for between 50 and 70% of the time and therefore meets coverage under the GSSG. The appellant believes that the agency did not credit high enough factor levels to his position.

FACTOR 1 - PROGRAM SCOPE AND EFFECT

This factor evaluates the general complexity, breadth, and impact of the program areas and work directed, including the organizational and geographic coverage. It also assesses the impact of the work both within and outside the immediate organization. To credit a particular factor level, the criteria for both Scope and Effect must be met.

The agency credited Factor Level 1-1, 175 points, to the position. The appealed position provides fire suppression, protection and prevention services for assigned areas on the Island of Yyy which is located approximately seven nautical miles from the U.S. Naval Station Zzz.

Scope addresses the general complexity and breadth of the program (or program segment) directed, the work directed, the products produced or the services delivered, and the geographic and organizational coverage of the program within the agency structure. Factor level 1-1 is met when work directed is procedural, routine, and typically provides services or products to specific persons or small, local organizations. Factor level 1-2 is met when the program segment or work directed is administrative, technical, complex, clerical, or comparable in nature. The functions, activities, or services provided have limited geographic coverage and support most of the activities comprising a typical agency field office, an area office, a small to medium military installation or comparable activities within agency program segments. The appealed position exceeds factor level 1-1 because the work involved is not procedural, routine and the fire protection/prevention services is not limited to small or local organizations. For scope, the appealed position is credited with factor level 1-2.

Effect addresses the impact of work, the products, and/or the programs described under "Scope" on the mission and programs of the customer(s), the activity, other activities in or out of government, the agencies, other agencies, the general public, or others. For effect, Factor Level 1-2 is met when the services or products support and significantly affect installation level, operations and objectives or

comparable program segments. The appellant's area of responsibility in area comprises approximately 25% of the total Naval Station area and covers 208 of the Naval Station's total of 1800 structural facilities. The appealed position relies upon the Fire Chief and Naval Station standby fire protection and emergency support when required. For effect, the appealed position is credited with factor level 1-1.

Consequently, factor level 1-2 for scope and factor level 1-1 for effect equate to factor level 1-1, 175 points for factor 1.

FACTOR 2 - ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

This factor considers the organizational situation of the supervisory position in relation to higher levels of management.

The agency credited factor level 2-1, 100 points, to the position. The position is accountable to a position that is two or more levels below an SES or flag officer, equivalent or higher level position in the direct supervisory chain. We concur and credit the appealed position with factor level 2-1.

FACTOR 3 - SUPERVISORY AND MANAGERIAL AUTHORITY EXERCISED

This factor measures the delegated supervisory and managerial authorities that are exercised on a recurring basis. To be credited with a level under this factor, a position must meet the authorities and responsibilities to the extent described for the specific level.

The agency credited factor level 3-2, 450 points, to the position. The appealed position fully meets factor level 3-2c. In order to meet factor level 3-3, a position must exercise delegated managerial authority to set a series of annual, multi year, or similar types of long range work plans and schedules for in-service or contracted work or exercise all or nearly all of delegated supervisory authorities and responsibilities such as: 1. Using any of the following to direct, coordinate, or oversee work: supervisors, team leaders, group coordinators, committee chairs, or comparable personnel; and/or providing similar oversight of contractors; 2. Exercising significant responsibilities in dealing with officials of higher rank; 3. Ensuring reasonable equity (among units, teams, projects, etc.) of performance standards and rating techniques developed by subordinates or assuring comparable equity in the assessment by subordinates of the adequacy of contractor capabilities or of contractor completed work; and 4. Direction of a program or major program segment with significant resources (e.g., one at a multimillion dollar level of annual resources); etc. The appealed position does not exercise these authorities and responsibilities and consequently is credited with factor level 3-2c, 450 points.

FACTOR 4 - PERSONAL CONTACTS

This is a two part factor that assesses the nature and the purpose of personal contacts related to supervisory and managerial responsibilities. The nature of the contacts, credited under Subfactor 4A, and the purpose of those contacts, credited under Subfactor 4B, must be based on the same contacts.

Subfactor 4A - Nature of Contacts

This subfactor covers the organizational relationships, authority or influence level, setting, and difficulty of preparation associated with making personal contacts involved in supervisory and managerial work. To be credited, the level of contacts must contribute to the successful performance of the work, be a recurring requirement, have a demonstrable impact on the difficulty and responsibility of the position, and require direct contact.

Level 4A-1 involves contacts with subordinates within the organizational unit(s) supervised, with peers who supervise comparable units within the larger organization, with union shop stewards, and/or with the staff of administrative and other support activities when the persons contacted are within the same organization as the supervisor. Contacts are typically informal and occur in person at the work place of those contacted, in routine meetings, or by telephone.

Level 4A-2 involves frequent contacts with members of the business community or the general public; higher ranking managers, supervisors, leaders and staff of program, administrative, and other work units and activities throughout the field activity, installation, command (below major command level) or major organization level of the agency; representatives of local public interest groups; - case workers in congressional district offices; technical or operating level employees of State and local governments; reporters for local and other limited media outlets reaching a small, general population. Contacts may be informal, occur in conferences and meetings, or take place through telephone, televised, radio, or similar contact, and sometimes require nonroutine or special preparation.

Level 4A-1 is met. The appellant engages in regular contacts with subordinates within the organizational unit supervised. The contacts are typically informal and occur in person or by telephone. Level 4A-2 is not met. The appellant does not engage in frequent contacts comparable to those described above for this level.

The agency credited factor level 4A-1, 25 points, to the position. We concur and credit the appealed position with factor level 4A-1, 25 points.

Subfactor 4B - Purpose of Contacts

This subfactor covers the purpose of the personal contacts credited in Subfactor 4A, including the advisory, representational, negotiating, and commitment making responsibilities related to supervision and management.

For level 4B-1, the purpose of contacts is to discuss work efforts for providing services; to exchange factual information about work operations and personnel management matters; and to provide training, advice, and guidance to subordinates.

For level 4B-2, the purpose of contacts is to ensure that information provided to outside parties is accurate and consistent; to plan and coordinate the work directed with that of others outside the subordinate organization; and/ or to resolve differences of opinion among managers, supervisors,

leaders, employees, contractors or others.

Level 4B-1 is met. The appellant engages in contacts to discuss work efforts for providing fire suppression, protection and prevention services and operations. Also, personnel management matters such as training, and guidance are routinely provided to subordinates. Level 4B-2 is not met. The appellant is not required to co-ordinate the work directed outside his unit or resolve differences of opinion among managers, supervisors or others.

The agency credited factor level 4B-1, 30 points, to the position. We concur and credit the appealed position with factor level 4B-1, 30 points.

FACTOR 5 - DIFFICULTY OF TYPICAL WORK DIRECTED

This factor measures the difficulty and complexity of the basic work most typical of the organisation(s) directed, as well as other line, staff, or contracted work for which the supervisor has technical or oversight responsibility, either directly or through subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or others.

The following is a breakdown of all the positions that are counted (25 percent or more of the nonsupervisory, nonleader duty hours of subordinates) to arrive at the highest level of base work:

Number Grade Percentage

2 GS-06 25%

6 GS-04 75%

The agency credited factor level 5-3, 340 points, to the position. We concur with factor level 5-3, 340 points. Consequently, factor level 5-3 is credited.

FACTOR 6 - OTHER CONDITIONS

This factor measures the extent to which various conditions contribute to the difficulty and complexity of carrying out supervisory duties, authorities, and responsibilities. Conditions affecting work for which the supervisor is responsible (whether performed by Federal employees, assigned military, contractors, volunteers, or others) may be considered if they increase the difficulty of carrying out assigned supervisory or managerial duties and authorities.

The agency credited factor level 6-2, 575 points, to the position. Factor level 6-2 involves supervising or overseeing technician and/or support work comparable in difficulty to GS-7 or GS-08, or work at the GS-04, 05, or 06 level where the supervisor has full and final technical authority over the work.

Factor level 6-1 involves work supervised or overseen which involves clerical, technician, or other work comparable in difficulty to the GS-06 level, or lower. This could vary from basic supervision

over a stable workforce performing work operations that are routine, to a level of supervision which requires coordination within the unit to ensure that timeliness, form, procedure, accuracy, quality and quantity standards are met in individual cases. The appealed position fully meets factor level 6-1 because it supervises firefighters who perform work comparable in difficulty to the GS-06 level or lower. We do not concur with the agency's allocation. The appealed position does not meet factor level 6-2 because it does not exercise full and final technical authority over the work. Therefore, we credit the appealed position with factor level 6-1, 310 points.

The Special Situations described in the GSSG include: Variety of Work, Shift Operations, Fluctuating Work Force or Constantly Changing Deadlines, Physical Dispersion, Special Staffing Situations, Impact of Specialized Programs, Changing Technology, and Special Hazard and Safety Conditions. The appealed position can only be credited with Shift Operations and Special Hazard and Safety Conditions. To be credited with the Special Situations adjustment factor, a position must meet 3 or more of the above. The appealed position does not meet this requirement for application.

SUMMARY		
FACTOR	LEVEL	POINTS
1. Program Scope and Effect	1-1	175
2. Organizational Setting	2-1	100
3. Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised	3-2c	450
4. Personal Contacts		
A. Nature of Contacts	4A-1	25
B. Purpose of Contacts	4B-1	30
5. Difficulty of Typical Work Directed	5-3	340
6. Other Conditions	6-1	310
No Special Situation Adjustment Factor	TOTAL	1430

Point range 1355 to 1600 = GS-07

The appealed position's technical duties equate to the GS-08 level and supervisory duties equate to the GS-07 level. In accordance with the GSSG, "If the position includes major nonsupervisory duties, evaluate them using appropriate other standards and guides. If they evaluate to a different grade than the position's supervisory duties, the grade for the higher level duties will be the final grade of the position." The appealed position is correctly classified at the GS-08 level.

DECISION

We have determined that the appealed position is correctly classified as Supervisory Firefighter, GS-081-08. This decision is a classification certificate that is binding on all administrative certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting offices within the Department of Defense.